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ABSTRACT

In 1988, a working group on early childhood care and education in New Zealand released a report, called "Education To Be More," which provided the foundation for remodeling the delivery of New Zealand's early childhood care and education. The report focused on general educational goals of equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. Four policies were established: (1) all government-funded educational institutions must have government-approved charters; (2) management would devolve to the local level; (3) educational salaries and operating costs for all government funded institutions would be provided by government "bulk" funding; and (4) the performance of all chartered educational institutions would be reviewed. The Ministry of Education proposed a specific goal of providing appropriate and high quality early childhood care and education for all. The targets related to this goal and strategies for achieving the goal are listed. The extent to which the five general educational goals (equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness, and economy) were met by 1991 is examined. Efforts of the Ministry of Education that affected early childhood education involved policy advice, management of contracts and administration of payments, provision and support of the curriculum, payment of salaries, and provision of information to the education community. (BC)

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TOI TU TE WHENUA, WHATUNGARONGARO HE TANGATA

PEOPLE COME AND GO BUT THE LAND REMAINS

Address to the Fifth Early Childhood Convention 8-12 September 1991

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Over the past three years New Zealand has embarked on the most thoroughgoing reform of education administration, and changes to its educational structures, than we have ever experienced before.

We have be reviewed, restructured, reshaped and relocated. We have been down-sized, decentralised, devolved and dis-established.

We have seen the demise of the Department of Education and the birth of the Ministry of Education, the ECDU, the SES, the ERO, the NZQA and other agencies, designed to pick up the functions of the former.Department of Education. We have also had a change of Government and, with it, major reviews of education. More recently, we have had a budget.

While all about us changes, and we, as parents and educators come and go, it is good to rememer that some things do remain the same. The land remains constant, as does the need of our children for the love, care and education of the older generations.

I would like to explore for a few minutes the impact of changes in early childhood education over recent years that have touched all our lives.

In 1988 the report of the working group on early childhood care and education, 'Education to be More', (also known as the Meade Report) was released. This report provided the foundation and the framework for remodelling of the the delivery of early childhood care and education. This report was largely adopted by the last Government. I thought it would be interesting to compare current directions in early childhood education with the intentions of 'Education to be More'.

"Education to be More" identified the existing early childhood care and education structure as being out of date for New Zealand's economic, social and educational needs. Piecemeal development over many years had resulted in a diverse range of early childhood services, but had also resulted in inequality between the different services.in such areas as access to government funding, childcare services, (and therefore to employment for women), and support for parents. Different standards of care and education for children had ensured.

PS 020145

It was time for changes to be made.

The Meade committee identified three essential features that needed to be present in every early childhood care and education arrangement. These were features which are in the interests of the child and the caregivers and the cultural survival and transmission to succeeding generations.

The committee addressed the benefits to be gained from good quality early childhood care and education and identified the characteristics of good quality services. These were staff:child ratios, group size, aregiver training, developmentlly appropriate curriculum planning and implementation, Te reo Maori and tikanga Maori, consistent care and education, partnership with parents or whanau, safe and healthy environment and close relationship with the community.

The committee identified issues relating to the status of early childhood care and education, equity of access to services, the importance of Maori determination and Maori control over services for their own children, the status of women and the structure and level of funding as five key areas as needing immediate improvement.

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1988 GOVERNMENT GOALS FOR REFORM OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

In addressing the task of reforming the administrative structures of early childhood services, "Education to be More" focussed on underlying goals that the Government of the time had made a commitment to.

Equity
- the principle of access to education for all
- equal employment opportunities for those working in education
- a recognition that the Treaty of Waitangi has special relevance for education.

Quality
- the Government's responsibility for maintaining standards in education.

Efficiency
- a recognition that resources in education are limited and that the best use be made of those available.

Effectiveness
- a need to ensure that the resources deployed in education achieve the desired results.

Economy
- that the community receive value for money from the considerable investment of resources in education.

These goals provided the basis for the four main policy mechanisms in the reform of education administration which applied to all sectors of education. They were:

Charters
- All education institutions receiving government funds must have charters approved by the Minister. In developing their charters there was a clear requirement that there be consultation with parents and communities.

Devolution
- Employer responsibilities and management would be devolved to local level.

Bulk Funding
- All government funded education instutions would be "bulk" funded, based on formula allocation systems, to provide for their salary and operating costs. The control of input expenditure was to be minimal.

Accountability by review
- The performance of all chartered education institutions would be reviewed against their agreed charters. For early childhood education, this also included licences and codes of practice.

The general themes and principles of Government reform, in particular the devolution of administrative responsibility and management to committees of management and boards of trustees, required the establishment of a range of new agencies and new accountability, review and management mechanisms.

Of central importance for early childhood services was the replacing of the old Department of Education with a new Ministry of Education, an Early Childhood Development Unit; a Special Education Service; an Education Review Office; a NZ Qualifications Authority, and in addition, a Parent Advocacy Council and a Teacher Registration Board.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION POLICIES

In looking at the impact of the new administrative structures on early childhood services over the last three years, I would like to focus on the early childhood education policies that have been put in place by Government to achieve the Government's 1988 goals of equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

1988 Ministry of Education Goals, Targets and Strategies

The Ministry of Education presented to the Minister of Education its first draft Education Goals,Targets and Strategies on 1 May 1990. There were ten goals, including one specifically for early childhood education.

Goal 2. Provide appropriate and high quality early childhood care and education for all who wish to have access to it.

Targets

1. To increase access to early childhood care and education for Pacific Island people and for other groups whose current rates of participation are low.

2. By 1 July 1990 to have promulgated into regulations the "Minimum Standards for Early Childhood Centres" and "Minimum Standards for Home-Based Early Childhood Schemes".

3. By 1 July 1990 to have in place a qualifications structure that will define what constitutes a recognised qualification for a trained early childhood education teacher, and for this to be used by the District Operatons Division of the Ministry when assessing the qualifications of supervisory staff for licensing and charter approval purposes.

4. By the end of 1991 to have developed and published curriculum guidelines for early childhood centres.

5. By 1994 to have enabled childcare staff to upgrade their qualifications to the equivalent of a three year pre-service course.

Strategies

1. To identify reasons for low participation rates amongst Pacific Island children in early childhood education.

2. To develop a comprehensive policy for the training of early childhood education teachers.

3. To make opportunities available for those who live in rural areas to undertake early childhood education training.

4. To encourage Maori language immersion programmes at teachers' colleges and in the community for early childhood education teachers.

5. To commission research on what constitutes a quality learning environment in early childhood education centres, and to investigate appropriate methods of care and education for children under 2 years of age.

1988 GOALS - AS ACHIEVED IN 1991

Using the government goals of 1988 we can examine to what extent these goals have been achieved, following a change in government, major reviews in early childhood education and the 1991 budget.

Equity

Access for all
- no limit on the number of new services
- exemption for funded playgroups
- policy for ECE centres above ground level
- building modifications introduced for users with disabilities

Equal employment opportunities
- charter statements for staff development
- field-based equivalency training courses
- college of education field-based training programme
- Employment Contract Bill

Recognition of Treaty of Waitangi
- included in Equity statement for charters

Quality

Maintaining Standards
- three year ECE training established in all colleges of educ.
- equivalency training courses, and additional Advanced Studies for Teachers papers
- ECE Regulations 1990
- ECE teaching qualification recognition
- individual, collective, attestation
- first aid qualifications recognised
- staff:child ratio for under 2s changed
- buildings and premises
- fire safety authorities recognised
- curriculum guidelines for developmentally appropriate programmes
- charter guidelines - Desirable Objectives and Practices
- Code of Practce for chartered home-based care arrangers
- two major research projects in progress
- Parents as First Teachers programme planned
- recognition of hospital playgroups as ECE centres

Efficiency
- Best use made of limited resources (Nov. '90 Memo)

Effectiveness
- Resources used to achieve desired results (Nov.'90)

Economy
- Community receives value for money
- bulk funding
- record keeping systems (Nov.'90 Memo)

Whereas "Education to be More" in 1988 had identified inequalities in the early childhood education structures, the 1991 government reviews of early childhood education identified regulations that were overly restrictive in allowing quality services to be easily accessible and affordable, and showed funding of services to be uneven.

The present Government is committed to the provision of high quality, self-managing, affordable early childhood education. It purchases from the Ministry of Education a series of outputs designed to help achieve these goals for early childhood education.

The Ministry of Education's outputs, as they affect early childhood education, as at 3 June 1991 are:

1. **Policy Advice**
   - research and policy development and policy review.

2. **Management of Contracts and Administration of Payments**
   - charters and licensing
   - EFTS (Equivalent Full Time Students) negotiations
   - tertiary funding
   - management of contracts with central agencies
   - payments to early childhood institutions
   - administration of discretionary and other specified funding

3. **Provision and Support of the Curriculum**
   - curriculum development
   - teacher development
   - provision of learning material

4. **Ministerial servicing**
   - Ministerials
   - Parliamentary Questions

5. **Payment of Salaries and Allowances**
   - payroll services
   - student allowances

6. **Provision of information to the education community.**

Concluding Comment

While the original intentions of 'Education to be More' have been altered during the restructuring of early childhood education administration, the 1988 government goals of equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness and economy have, however, remained firmly in place as the underlying principles for educational change.

The policy changes we have seen introduced between the Ministry of Education's May, 1988 goals and targets, and the Ministry's June 1991 outputs for early childhood education, have been designed to put in place the intentions expressed in 'Education to be More' within the framework of Government's goals for education.

In 1988 'Education to be More' contained an outline of steps to establish a more equitable system of early childhood care and education. 'Before Five' set out the then Government's policies. The framework was the goals for the state sector of equity, quality, efficiency, effectiveness and economy. These goals formed the base for the Ministry of Education's 1988 goal - to 'provide appropriate and high quality early childhood care and education for all who wish to have access to it'.

In 1991 the Ministry of Education goals for early childhood education are specific and defined in six outputs, each of which is designed to help achieve the present Government's goal of providing high quality, self-managing, affordable early childhood education.

A comparison of the current directions in early childhood education with the original intentions in 'Education to be More' shows that the new education agencies, the change in Government, the reviews of education and the 1991 budget decisions have all influenced the current direction for early childhood education.

For some people the current direction can be seen as not desirable. For others the direction is promising. One thing is certain, we still have some some distance to travel

before we see put in place the equitable system of quality early childhood care and education envisaged by the Meade committee.

There is no doubt that there will be more changes ahead, there always are. Early childhood education, like everyday life, is not static, but is vital and ever-developing. As parents, staff and educators we want the very best for our children and our children's children. Whether our involvement in early childhood education is short, or spans many years, we each aim to improve the services and support that we have in New Zealand for families with very young children. Let us continue to work together to put in place an early childhood education system that meets the needs of all our families and fulfills the aims and the vision in 'Education to be More'.

Toi tu te whenua, whatungarognaro he tangata - People come and go, but the land remains.

Carol Garden, Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry of Education